



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

PO Box 170
Moose, Wyoming 83012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 18, 2002 02:45

Joan Anzelmo/Jackie Skaggs
307 739-3393 (fax 739-3419)

Grand Teton National Park News Release

RANGERS RESCUE INJURED CLIMBER ON NEZ PERCE

After receiving a cell phone call for help at 12 noon today, Grand Teton National Park rangers initiated the rescue of one injured climber from an 11,700-foot elevation off the south side of Nez Perce Peak. Doug Hemken, age 43 from Madison, Wisconsin, was belaying two climbing partners when one of the climbers fell causing an anchor to pull loose. The failure of the anchor sent Hemken tumbling 20-30 feet. The accident occurred about 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon.

Hemken's climbing companions stabilized him after the fall and the trio spent the night on Nez Perce during an active thunderstorm with numerous lightning strikes. Steve Gaffield from Washington, D.C. and the third partner climbed up and over the summit of Nez Perce to reach the south fork of Garnet Canyon this morning. They were able to contact someone in Garnet Canyon Meadows with a cell phone to make a call for help at mid-day today.

After locating the injured climber and conducting an aerial reconnaissance flight, four rangers were shuttled at 1:45 p.m. by the park's contract helicopter to a helispot in the upper south fork of Garnet Canyon. Two rangers were picked up and transported using the short-haul technique and inserted one at a time directly into the patient's location. After quickly assessing the patient's condition and consulting with the park's medical director, a decision was made to evacuate the patient using the short haul technique. The patient was flown, accompanied by an attending ranger, directly to Lupine Meadows where he was then taken by park ambulance to St. John's Medical Center.

This marks the second use of the short haul technique and the third major search and rescue operation in Grand Teton National Park this year.

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